

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently amended) An automated freezer comprising:
 - a freezer compartment maintainable at a freezing temperature for storing and maintaining food in a frozen state;
 - a removable cartridge for storing a plurality of items, the cartridge being positionable in the freezer compartment;
 - a platform moveable within said removable cartridge in response to a request for at least one of said items; and
 - a retention mechanism comprising at least one retention member moveable between a first position and a second position, the at least one retention member when in the first position located to retain at least one of said items in the freezer compartment after removal from the cartridge and when said cartridge is removed from the freezer compartment, so that the at least one item is retainable in the freezer compartment for maintaining the item at a freezing temperature and in a frozen state.
- 2-3. (Canceled)
4. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1 further including a removal device and an exit opening, and said removal device removes at least one of said items from said automated freezer through said exit opening in response to said request.

5. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 4 wherein said platform raises after at least one of said items exits said automated freezer through said exit opening.
6. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 4 further including a sensor, and said removal device removes at least one of said items from said automated freezer through said exit opening in response to said request when said sensor detects at least one of said items.
7. (Original) The automated freezer as recited in claim 4 wherein said removal device is pivotal.
8. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1 further including a controller associated with the automated freezer and a POS device, and wherein said request comprises a signal sent by said POS device.
9. (Original) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1 wherein said cartridge has a substantially circular inner profile.
10. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1 wherein said cartridge includes a first portion and a second portion, and said first portion is removably attached to said second portion by an attachment feature, and said first portion includes a first bottom end having a first half-circular cutout and said second portion includes a second bottom end having a second half-circular cutout, said first half-circular cutout and said second half-circular cutout define a circular cutout when said first portion is attached to said second portion.
11. (Original) The automated freezer as recited in claim 10 wherein said platform has a platform diameter and said circular cutout has a cutout diameter, and said cutout diameter is greater than said platform diameter.
12. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 10 wherein said cartridge includes a bottom edge having an opening with an opening dimension,

and said platform includes a platform diameter, and said opening dimension is greater than said platform diameter.

13-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A method for transferring at least one item from an automated freezer comprising:

- loading the at least one item into a cartridge;
- positioning said cartridge in a freezer compartment of the automated freezer, the compartment being maintained at a freezing temperature;
- sending a request to the automated freezer;
- automatically removing the at least one item from the cartridge in the freezer compartment in response to the request;
- removing the cartridge from the freezer compartment;
- providing a retention mechanism comprising at least one retention member moveable between a first position and a second position, and
- retaining by the at least one retention member at least a portion of at least said one item in the freezer compartment after the removing of the cartridge so that the at least one item is retained in the freezer compartment for maintaining the item at a freezing temperature and in a frozen state.

19. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1 further comprising transferring said at least one item from the automatic freezer to a grill for cooking said at least one item.

20. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1 further including a sensor that detects when said cartridge is empty and a visual indicator that indicates when said sensor detects that said cartridge is empty.

21. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1, wherein said at least one item is a hamburger.

22. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1, further comprising automatically transferring said at least one item from the automated freezer to a grill for cooking said at least one item in response to the request.

23. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 1, wherein said automated freezer freezes at least one item.

24. (Currently amended) An automated freezer comprising:

a freezer compartment maintained at a freezing temperature for storing frozen food;

a removable cartridge for storing at least one item, the cartridge being positionable in the freezer compartment;

a platform moveable within said removable cartridge in response to a request for said at least one item;

a retention mechanism to retain a portion of said at least one item in the freezer compartment after removal from the cartridge and when said cartridge is removed from the compartment so that the at least one item is retainable in the freezer compartment for maintaining the item at a freezing temperature and in a frozen state; and

a buffer in the freezer compartment defining an inner passage, said buffer having a lower end and said retention mechanism, wherein said cartridge further includes an upper end, and said upper end of said cartridge is received in said lower end of said buffer.

25. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 24 wherein said retention mechanism is a plurality of arms moveable between a first position and a second position, and said plurality of arms enter said inner passage when in said first position and said plurality of arms do not enter said inner passage when in said second position.

26. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 25 further including a resilient member that biases said plurality of arms into said first position.

27. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 25 wherein said plurality of arms comprise four arms.

28. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 25 wherein said first position is substantially perpendicular to said second position.

29. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 25 wherein said at least one item biases said plurality of arms into said second position.

30. (Previously presented) An automated freezer comprising:

a freezer compartment for storing food therein contained in a removable cartridge;

a removable cartridge located in the freezer compartment for storing at least one item;

a platform moveable within said removable cartridge in response to a request for said at least one item;

a retention mechanism to retain at least a portion of said at least one item in the automated freezer when said cartridge is removed from the automated freezer, wherein said retention mechanism is a plurality of arms moveable between a first position and a second position, and said plurality of arms enter said inner passage when in said first position and said plurality of arms do not enter said inner passage when in said second position; and

a buffer defining an inner passage, said buffer having a lower end and said retention mechanism, wherein said cartridge further includes an upper end, and said upper end of said cartridge is received in said lower end of said buffer.

31. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 30 further including a resilient member that biases said plurality of arms into said first position.

32. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 30 wherein said plurality of arms comprise four arms.

33. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 30 wherein said first position is substantially perpendicular to said second position.

34. (Previously presented) The automated freezer as recited in claim 30 wherein said at least one item biases said plurality of arms into said second position.